



Piedmont Bird Club



An organization for lovers of wild birds
in North Carolina's Piedmont

Summary of Activities September-December 2020

PBC and COVID-19: A Message from the President

COVID-19 has changed our world and everything we do. We face many uncertainties in the coming year, so the PBC will adjust its activities accordingly. Even with the challenges of social distancing, we will still have a good year with many engaging and safe ways to enjoy birds and our fellow birders.

As you might imagine, planning PBC activities will be a challenge. While some activities can be scheduled as in the past, others will need to be more responsive to where we are in controlling the pandemic. Keep the following in mind:

- The PBC will remain active but safe and flexible. Many activities will need to limit group size, so participants must sign up with the leader ahead of time.
- Members must be vigilant about following protocols for outdoor activities—follow mask protocols, keep to small groups, and maintain social distancing.
- Because conditions will undoubtedly change over time, we can't create a calendar for the whole 2020-21 program year. Activities will be announced on our website and on the PBC members' email listserv. Be sure to check these regularly to stay up to date on upcoming trips, programs, and other club activities.



Stay safe and enjoy the beauty and wonder of nature during these challenging times.

Stella Wear, PBC President



Piedmont Young Birders Enjoy the Greenway, July 11, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

On Saturday, July 11, 2020, six Piedmont Young Birders (PYB) and two parents joined Melanie Buckingham, Ann Steighner, Tom Wear, and Stella Wear at the Leonard Recreation Center for a bird walk on a portion of the Bicentennial Greenway. Since the group size was a total of 12, it was a workable number during these Covid-19 virus times. All participants wore masks and were able to distance appropriately.

Within the short distance from the Center's parking lot to Guilford Elementary School, the group saw 21 different species of birds. Highlights were Indigo Bunting, Belted Kingfisher, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Towhee, and Red-winged Blackbird (complete list below). One very special treat was a Green Heron family near the school retention pond. This trail is excellent for birding. It has a variety of habitats and a good variety of birds that change seasonally. It is not a very busy area so distancing is easier than on some of the busy trails around the area. More birding walks are planned for the PYB in the months to come.

The Piedmont Young Birders is an organization for high school and middle school students. It is sponsored by T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society and The Piedmont Bird Club. Melanie Buckingham, member of both TGPAS and PBC, is the chair of the team of volunteers that helps with the programs for the youth group. In the future more youth will be invited to join this group. If you know someone who is interested in becoming a member of Piedmont Young Birders, contact Melanie at melsbuck@yahoo.com or any board member of T. Gilbert Audubon Society or Piedmont Bird Club

Species List		
American Crow	Common Grackle	Indigo Bunting
Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Bluebird	Mourning Dove
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Eastern Towhee	Northern Cardinal
Brown Thrasher	European Starling	Northern Flicker
Carolina Wren	Fish Crow	Northern Mockingbird
	Great Blue Heron	Red-shouldered Hawk
	Green Heron	Red-winged Blackbird



Workday at Woven Works Park, July 11, 2020

submitted by Melanie Stadler, Conservation Committee Chair

On July 11, 2020, three Piedmont Bird Club members participated in the cleanup at Woven Works Park, along with several volunteers from other groups. Woven Works Park, part of the Downtown Greenway in Greensboro, is home to the Bird, Bee, and Butterfly Pollinator Garden. Diane Laslie, with the NC Native Plant Society, helped guide volunteers with projects for the morning. The outdoor activity, with masks required, enabled everyone to be safely distanced and protected from the pandemic. Another workday will be scheduled in August.

Volunteer Workday on the Downtown Greenway

Join us for a Volunteer Workday at the Bird, Bee, & Butterfly Pollinator Garden at Woven Works Park (401 Cumberland St) on Saturday, July 11 from 8-10am

No gardening experience necessary. Members of the Native Plant Society & Piedmont Bird Club will guide volunteers who will assist with weeding and planting. We will follow social distancing guidelines and limit group to no more than 25 people. Please bring your own water, mask and gardening gloves. Email Laura Lorenz at llorenz@actiongreensboro.org or call 336.387.8355 if you plan to join us.



photo courtesy of Downtown Greenway Greensboro



Piedmont Young Birders Second Walk on Bicentennial Greenway, August 22, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

On Saturday, August 22, 2020, a second birding walk was enjoyed by a Piedmont Young Birder (PYB), Nora Mullins, and her mother. This is Nora's third year in the PYB and she is a great birder with her sharp vision and excellent ear. Melanie Buckingham, Lynn Allison, Lynne Gray, Tom Wear, and Stella Wear joined them to lead this walk at the Leonard Recreation Center.

Within the short distance from the Center's parking lot to Guilford Elementary School, the group saw 23 different species of birds. The highlight of the walk was a pair of Palm Warblers, a life bird for Nora. This trail changes quickly from season to season. Participants noted that many of the birds that were here in July have now gone for the summer.



photo by Lynn Allison

Species List

American Crow
American Goldfinch
American Robin
Blue Jay
Carolina Chickadee
Canada Goose
Carolina Wren

Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Towhee
European Starling
Field Sparrow
Fish Crow
Mourning Dove
Northern Cardinal

Northern Flicker
Northern Mockingbird
Palm Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Song Sparrow
Tufted Titmouse



Workday at Woven Works Park, September 12, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

photos courtesy of Downtown Greenway Greensboro



Three organizations—T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society, Piedmont Bird Club, and the Native Plant Society—joined the City of Greensboro for a gardening workday at the Bird, Bee, & Butterfly Pollinator Garden at Woven Works Park on Saturday, September 12th, from 8–10 a.m. Special thanks to those who were able to come out—what an impressive pile of debris!

Since this event is outside, it is a great way to follow social distancing guidelines and have some fun. Everyone is offered a chance to chat with fellow birders and outdoor enthusiasts and learn about native plants that you can plant in your own yard to attract our pollinator friends.



Piedmont Young Birders September Walk on Bicentennial Greenway, September 19, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear



photo by Lynn Allison

On Saturday, September 19, 2020, the Piedmont Young Birders (PYB) participated in another walk on the Bicentennial Greenway. It was a rather cool and windy morning, but we had a good turnout of seven youths and five parents. Melanie Buckingham, Lynn Allison, Tom Wear and Stella Wear joined them to lead this walk at the Leonard Recreation Center.

A fair number (20) of species of birds were seen or heard. The main attraction on this walk was a family of Red-shouldered Hawks mobbed by a dozen American Crows. It is easy to understand why this group would be called a “murder” of crows. The spotting scope was very popular with everyone as it allowed all to see the details and differences between the parent and juvenile hawks. Other highlights, and new for this walk, were Eastern Phoebe and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

This was the third time this section of the Bicentennial Greenway has been the location for the PYB monthly walks. The October walk will be on a different section of the Greenway, between Drawbridge Parkway and Horse Pen Creek Road. This section is more wooded and will provide different habitat types and a good opportunity for different species of birds.

Species List:

American Crow
American Goldfinch
Belted Kingfisher
Black Vulture
Blue Jay
Carolina Chickadee

Carolina Wren
Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Towhee
European Starling
Gray Catbird
Mourning Dove
Northern Cardinal

Northern Flicker
Northern Mockingbird
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-shouldered Hawk
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Tufted Titmouse



Field Trip: Dan River Game Land, September 20, 2020

submitted by Matt Wangerin



White-eyed Vireo by Ann Van Sant



Rose-breasted Grosbeak by Ann Van Sant



Blackburnian Warbler by Jim Gant

Rockingham County resident Marty Wall led 16 other members of the Piedmont Bird Club at the Dan River Game Land, one of his favorite local birding spots. The morning walk started at the tract along Woodpecker Road, an old farm road now surrounded by secondary growth scrub. While various woodpeckers were observed, the road might more appropriately be named White-eyed Vireo Road, as that species was in great abundance during this walk.

The targets of this early fall field trip were southward migrating passerines. Fourteen species of warblers were observed, including favorites like Black-and-white Warbler and American Redstart, as well as less common Blackburnian Warbler and Tennessee Warbler. The group also witnessed wrens, sparrows, vultures, and a cooperative Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A couple of irruptive Red-breasted Nuthatches tooted and showed well.

Upon returning to the cars, we caravanned to the Riverside Circle tract. We were able to relocate a Lincoln's Sparrow, which Marty had originally found at about 7:00 a.m., scouting before the group assembled. The rare, handsome sparrow popped out of the bushes briefly, showing the fine black streaks on a buff-colored breast. A shorter walk along the woods and fields north of the parking lot revealed many of the same bird species seen earlier. We were able to add a lone Red-headed Woodpecker, some hawks, and a couple of Common Ravens in the distance.



Lincoln's Sparrow by Ann Van Sant

Species List

Mourning Dove

Chimney Swift

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-bellied Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Eastern Wood-Pewee

Eastern Phoebe

White-eyed Vireo

Red-eyed Vireo

Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Carolina Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Tree Swallow

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

House Wren

Carolina Wren

Gray Catbird

Brown Thrasher

American Robin

Cedar Waxwing

American Goldfinch

Field Sparrow

Savannah Sparrow

Lincoln's Sparrow

Eastern Towhee

Ovenbird

Tennessee Warbler

Black-and-white Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

Hooded Warbler

American Redstart

Cape May Warbler

Northern Parula

Magnolia Warbler

Blackburnian Warbler

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Palm Warbler

Pine Warbler

Prairie Warbler

Scarlet Tanager

Northern Cardinal

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Blue Grosbeak

Indigo Bunting



Field Trip: Swifts Night Out, September 21–23, 2020

The Chimney Swift Challenge

submitted by Stella Wear

Getting to see Chimney Swifts this year proved to be somewhat of a challenge. The September 17 watch had to be postponed because of the rain brought by Hurricane Sally. Then just finding roosting places became a challenge. For the past few years of watching this fall migration, thousands of swifts were roosting at the Carolina Theatre in Downtown Greensboro. On September 14, the swifts did not choose that roosting place even though birds were flying around in town near the theater.



photo courtesy of Audubon NC

When the viewing activities were rescheduled, three options were offered. Monday, September 21, was a fantastic virtual viewing hosted by Audubon NC and narrated by Curtis Smalling, Audubon Director of Conservation. Thousands of Swifts were seen going to roost in Winston-Salem and Durham, NC. Tuesday, September 22, was the annual viewing for TGPAS and PBC at Carolina Theater, 310 S. Greene Street, Greensboro, 27401. About a dozen participants, 100 American Crows, and 250+ Chimney Swifts were there.



photo by Ann Van Sant

It is interesting to note how Chimney Swift patterns change. Where are those large numbers roosting now? Finally, on Wednesday, September 23, the viewing took place at a new location: Lindley Elementary School, 2700 Camden Road, Greensboro. The event attracted several neighborhood observers as well as 20 PBC and TGPAS participants. The Swifts were slow to arrive, but when they did, it was a good showing (250+). The swooping, circling, and diving into the chimney was exciting.

The Chimney Swifts will be around for a few weeks into October before they head south to the Amazon Basin for the winter. They will start to return in mid-March.



Program: “Birds and Marine Life in Antarctica”, October 15, 2020

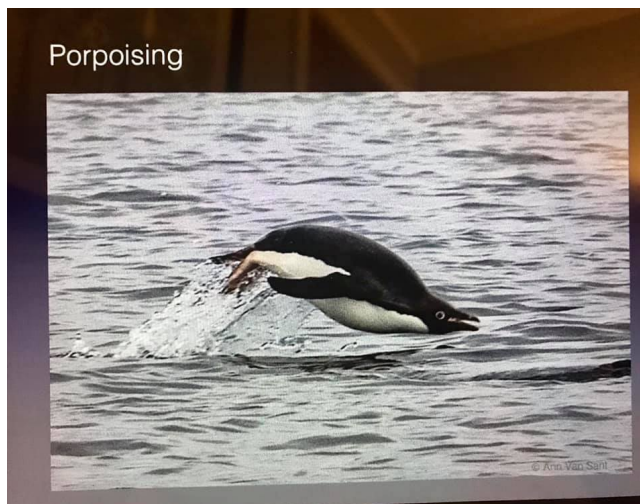
submitted by Barbara Haralson

photos by Ann Van Sant

We had a terrific turnout for our first meeting of the season, which was held virtually through Zoom. This was a joint meeting with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society, and the presenters, Roberta Newton and Ann Van Sant, are members of both. They shared their journey through the Antarctic aboard the National Geographic Explorer through Ann's beautiful photography and Roberta's knowledge of conservation. We learned that the keystone species for the health of the

Antarctic is krill, which is primarily harvested to give color to farm-raised salmon and shrimp. Krill oil is also used in some human supplements. Krill is an important food source for the food chain, so please avoid farm-raised salmon and shrimp, and check your supplements to make sure there is no mention of krill oil.

To view entire program on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Ff1g5B3Qj0U>



October Big Day 2020, October 17, 2020

submitted by Roberta Newton



Scarlet Tanager by Matt Wangerin



Song Sparrow by Ann Van Sant

October 17, 2020, was the biggest day in birding history, breaking the world record for the most species reported in a single day!

Many thanks to Piedmont Bird Club members who did their part as citizen scientists. The data are used, for example, to study the abundance of species and to track migration patterns. Photos and sound recordings are submitted to the MacCauley library to strengthen Merlin ID, the free bird app.

In Guilford County, NC:

Participants submitting one or more checklists: 24

Completed checklists: 47

Species: 89

Worldwide:

Participants: 32,239

Checklists: 77,967

Countries: 168

Species: 7097

To see breakdowns of the data by country, visit <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2020-a-global-birding-phenomenon>



Blue-headed Vireo by Matt Wangerin



Piedmont Young Birders October Walk, October 25, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

On October 25, 2020, the rainy weather did not stop the Piedmont Young Birders. Attendance was excellent. There were 16 participants: 8 youths, 3 parents, and 5 volunteer leaders.

The 5:00 p.m. walk was on a section of the Bicentennial Greenway that joins Drawbridge Parkway to Horse Pen Creek Road. This was the first time that the monthly walks have been held in the afternoon.

Matt Wangerin joined the group as guest leader to share his birding-by-ear skills. He showed how playing a recording of an Eastern Screech Owl mobbed by Carolina Chickadees will attract many interested species. The three favorite species of the day were Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and an unidentified large bird that we thought might have been a Barred Owl. Twenty-eight species were heard or seen. At the close of the walk, the data was recorded on eBird, another new experience for the monthly walks.

Species List

Canada Goose	Carolina Chickadee	House Finch
Mallard	Tufted Titmouse	American Goldfinch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Field Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Northern Flicker	European Starling	Song Sparrow
Eastern Phoebe	Gray Catbird	Eastern Towhee
Blue Jay	Northern Mockingbird	Black-throated Blue Warbler
American Crow	Eastern Bluebird	Pine Warbler
	Hermit Thrush	Yellow-rumped Warbler
	American Robin	Northern Cardinal



Program: “Why Birds? The Importance of Birds to Conservation in North Carolina” November 19, 2020

Submitted by Lisa Frandock, Recording Secretary (edited from the November minutes)

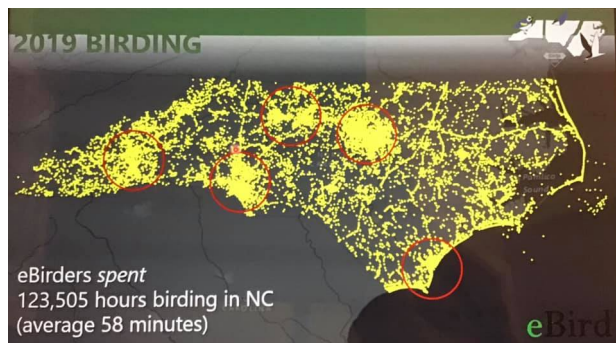
The Piedmont Bird Club’s second program of the year was again held via Zoom. Scott Anderson from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission discussed his perspective on the future of bird conservation in our demographically changing state. His talk included information about research efforts involving the NC Birding Trail, a proposed NC Bird Atlas, and other efforts by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and partners. We were encouraged to know our commissioners and communicate with them our concerns about bird conservation efforts.

According to Scott, North Carolina is #10 in diversity of bird species—an average of 470 species a year. Our state also has 327 birding trails.

More information about birds and birding in NC can be found at these sites:

ncbirdingtrail.org
ncatlas.org
3billionbirds.org

To see Zoom meeting, go to <https://youtu.be/KDHHdtR-Z64>





Piedmont Young Birders Gather at Price Park, November 21, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

photos by Lynn Allison

The Piedmont Young Birders met for a presentation and birding walk on November 21 at the Price Park Bird and Butterfly Meadow in Greensboro.

Naturalist Dennis Burnette joined the group to share information about binocular use. Participants practiced their skills by focusing on pictures of a variety of bird species that would be expected in the area. Dennis also presented a mini-lesson on the variety of sparrows that might be found at Price Park during this time of the year.

After the presentation, everyone walked around the area looking for the birds discussed. Even though only 15 species were identified, the group found the target birds—the sparrows they had expected to see.

Attending the event were four youths, four parents, and five volunteers from the Piedmont Bird Club and T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society.

The December walk will be held at the Audubon Natural Area. Everyone is excited to visit the area that just earned *birding hot spot* status on the *eBird* app.



Species List

Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Blue Jay	Field Sparrow
American Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Carolina Chickadee	Song Sparrow
Carolina Wren	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Mockingbird	Eastern Towhee
American Robin	Northern Cardinal
Cedar Waxwing	



Piedmont Young Birders visit ANA, December 12, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear

On December 12, Amy Hanson led the Piedmont Young Birders on their monthly walk at the T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Natural Area (ANA). After a brief introduction which included some historical information about the area, Amy led the group on a winding trip to hunt for some special birds that had recently been spotted in the area. A highlight and a life bird for one of the young birders was a Brown Creeper. Other highlights were four species of woodpeckers and two species of nuthatches. After the walk, the list of species was reviewed and entered in the log book. The log book for visitor remarks is in an attractive wooden stand, the newest scout project at the ANA.

This was the first time that the participants had visited this area, which has just recently been listed as a birding hotspot on eBird. One of the volunteers said that she lives nearby and did not even know that this special gem was here to explore.



Brown Creeper
photo: allaboutbirds.org
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Species list:

Mourning Dove
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Blue Jay
American Crow
crow sp.
Carolina Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
European Starling
Brown Thrasher
Northern Mockingbird
Eastern Bluebird
American Robin

Purple Finch
American Goldfinch
Dark-eyed Junco
White-throated Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Eastern Towhee
Pine Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Cardinal



photo by Melanie Buckingham



Members' Holiday Photo Show, December 17, 2020

submitted by Stella Wear (edited from the December minutes)

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, regular meetings of the Piedmont Bird Club are held via Zoom. So although we did not have our usual holiday get-together with its buffet of excellent food, we did have a menu of excellent photos. Six members presented, and each had a special theme for their story.

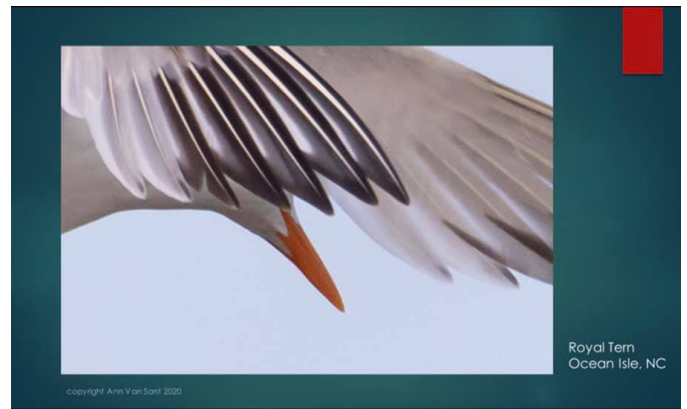
Below are just a few samples of the entertaining presentation. The entire program can be viewed online at <https://youtu.be/btdD7RzFnqc>



Kudos to PBC Program Co-chairs, Barbara Haralson and Ann Steighner, for keeping us safe by bringing all of our monthly meetings into our homes via Zoom.



Lou Skrabec—Lou presented the duck photos that he has taken over the past 10 years. His presentation demonstrated how to tell similar species apart. The catchy title was “Ducks I have Shot.”



Ann Van Sant—Ann shared shots that gave us a look at bird personalities, showing us special behaviors and displays. Her shots were from 2020 travels in Virginia and North Carolina and her only “far away” trip to Colorado.

Socially
distanced
Great
Blue
Hérons



Tom Gaffney—Tom shared a variety of his favorite photos from local birding trips and travels to other countries. Each photo had a special story. This one is particularly appropos to 2020.



Dan Dery—Dan shared shots from his first year of birding. He talked about struggling with lousy binoculars and digiscope, then learning with good binoculars and camera. Most of his photos were of life birds.



Matt Wangerin—Matt shared his 2020 photos of birds that were life birds, county birds, or state birds. Most were taken in North Carolina and represented rarities for the state. This Varied Thrush was photographed in Cary, NC.



Lee Capps—Lee showed us the art of bird silhouettes on a backdrop of sunsets and sunrises. Many were taken at Lake Mackintosh and other local rural areas. Lee’s beautiful photos regularly grace our e-mail inboxes.